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December 20, 2022

Vermont Downtown Development Board
C/o Chris Cochran, Director Community Planning and Revitalization
Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs
National Life Building, 6th Floor Drawer 20
Montpelier, VT 05620

RE: Town of Colchester's New Town Center Designation Renewal Request

Dear Members of the Vermont Downtown Development Board:

On behalf of the Town of Colchester, I respectfully submit to you a request for continuation of our scheduled hearing on the town's application for renewal of its New Town Center designation.

Like many communities, the impacts of the pandemic and significant staff turnover have caused delays in some of our missions. The Town of Colchester's Planning and Zoning department saw staff departures and 100% turnover in 2021, including at the department director level. While I am extremely proud of the resilience and competency of our remarkable staff, it has reasonably taken us some time to acquire the historical knowledge, tools, and time needed to fully advance key priorities, while still meeting statutory deadlines for our core permitting functions.

This is not at all to say that the Town has been inactive in promoting or enhancing the valuable assets of the New Town Center (NTC) area. Quite the contrary, private land owners and the Town have worked together to see the area mature significantly. The NTC now provides for more than 500 residential units, with tens of thousands of square feet of non-residential space that includes medical offices, personal services, two childcare and preschool centers, a successful restaurant, and several professional office spaces. Walking trails previously in development now see frequent use by neighborhood and town residents. The town green with gazebo has genuinely blossomed into a valuable community space- a key feature we are excited to share about more in detail at our hearing.

We anticipate that this request represents a short delay from our scheduled hearing, and we ask for a continuation not to exceed six months, with a temporary suspension of NTC benefits during this time period and no impact to the Town's broader Growth Center designation (approved in 2009 with a successful check-in in 2019).



We intend to be present at your meeting on January 23rd to answer any questions, address any concerns, and request a date certain for continuance of this hearing. We look forward to working with you on a successful application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathyann LaRose". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Cathyann LaRose, AICP
Planning and Zoning Director